



NEWS RELEASE

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Fort Leavenworth Regional Initiative ***Announced By USDA Rural Development*** ***August 29th Regional Initiative Meeting Scheduled***

Topeka, KS – Fort Leavenworth Garrison Commander Colonel John Towers joined USDA Rural Development State Director Chuck Banks today in announcing the creation of USDA-Fort Leavenworth Regional Initiative to support both BRAC-related and general economic development efforts in the Fort Leavenworth area. The USDA-Fort Leavenworth Regional Initiative will be similar to the successful USDA-Fort Riley Regional Initiative, which was established in 2005 to assist potential homebuyers relocating to the Fort Riley, Kansas area and to support that region's communities impacted by last year's BRAC announcement.

"The Agency is excited about establishing the USDA-Fort Leavenworth Regional Initiative. We are looking forward to a successful partnership between Fort Leavenworth and USDA Rural Development, along with cooperating with area community and business development leaders, to assist the region and those who choose to live and work in the Fort Leavenworth area," commented State Director Banks.

Colonel Towers, commenting on the creation of the USDA-Fort Leavenworth Regional Initiative said, "The USDA Rural Development project holds real promise for Soldiers at Fort Leavenworth. The ability of the USDA Rural Development to guarantee loans for young Soldiers seeking to buy a home in small communities will be a win-win for the Soldiers, their families, and some smaller Kansas communities in the local commuting area."

The official 'kick-off' meeting of the USDA-Fort Leavenworth Regional Initiative has been scheduled for August 29th at the Frontier Conference Center at Fort Leavenworth.

U.S. Senator Pat Roberts, commenting on today's USDA announcement, said, "I am very pleased USDA will bring their successful Regional Initiative to Ft. Leavenworth, providing important housing and other assistance to Soldiers from around the world relocating to the community. After one year of Ft. Riley's Regional Initiative, we have seen a real and direct impact in the quality of life for men and women in uniform and their families. It is clear to me that this kind of proactive community outreach, planning and vision is part of what makes Kansas a great home to the nation's military."

U.S. Senator Sam Brownback, also commenting on the announcement said, "I am pleased that USDA Rural Development is expanding its outreach efforts to include a USDA-Fort Leavenworth Regional Initiative. With the success of the USDA's similar initiative in the Fort Riley area, I hope even more Kansans will utilize USDA Rural Development's excellent programs."

Congressman Jim Ryun in his statement said, "I applaud USDA Rural Development in their continued support of our military families. The Fort Leavenworth Regional Initiative will provide much needed help for our service members through the guaranteed homeownership loan program which gives them the opportunity to pursue the American dream of homeownership."

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The USDA-Fort Leavenworth Regional Initiative will be patterned after the successful USDA-Fort Riley Regional Initiative, which celebrated its one-year anniversary last month. Both initiatives focus on financing home loans to eligible Soldiers and military personnel through Agency-approved lenders and providing additional assistance to communities impacted by the BRAC process. USDA Rural Development of Kansas is partnering with the Agency's staff in Missouri to enable Missouri lenders to participate in this special initiative. Since the beginning of 2006, over \$5 million in homeownership loans have been guaranteed or directly financed by USDA Rural Development in the Fort Riley area to Soldiers and military personnel.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs that support increasing economic opportunities and enhancing the quality of life of rural Americans. As a venture capital entity, USDA Rural Development provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure in rural America. During Fiscal Year 2005, USDA Rural Development delivered nearly \$235 million in community and economic development programming benefiting Kansas.

Additional information regarding the USDA-Fort Leavenworth Regional Initiative can be obtained by contacting the Agency's Oskaloosa office at 785-863-2587. Individuals may also call the Agency's state headquarters at 785-271-2722 or log onto the state's USDA Rural Development website at: www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks

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